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LETTER DATED 5 JUNE 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LUXEMBOURG TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to draw your attention to the text of a statement on Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) following the ministerial meeting held in Luxembourg on 28 and 29 May 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and of its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jean-Louis WOLZFELD
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Luxembourg to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: French]

Statement on Bosnia and Herzegovina issued at the close of the ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) held at Luxembourg on 28 May 1998

1. The Alliance has made a decisive contribution to stability and peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Recently, encouraging progress has been achieved in implementing several elements of the 1995 Peace Agreement. However, much remains to be done. Today, after consultation with the non-NATO contributor countries, we approved the operational plans for maintaining the Stabilization Force (SFOR) beyond June 1998 in order to promote the further implementation of the Peace Agreement. With the establishment within SFOR of a specialized multinational unit having the same mandate as its other elements, SFOR will be better equipped to help the local authorities deal with civil unrest without acting as a police force, thereby facilitating the return of refugees and displaced persons and the taking of office by elected officials.

2. While responsibility for implementation of the Agreement lies first and foremost with the parties, SFOR will continue, within the limits of its resources and abilities, to provide broad support for the implementation of civilian components. Accordingly, it will provide assistance to the following, while maintaining close and effective coordination with them:

The High Representative, for the implementation of civilian elements of the Peace Agreement;

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, on a priority basis, in connection with the staggered and orderly return of refugees;

The United Nations International Police Task Force, for the reform and restructuring of the local police;

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), in the context of the September elections;

The United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, by transferring to The Hague persons accused of war crimes.

Arrests by SFOR during the past year of persons accused of war crimes have contributed to the peace process and have highlighted our willingness not to overlook this aspect of the Peace Agreement.

3. The achievement of progress in these areas will contribute not only to the consolidation of peace within a single democratic and multi-ethnic State but also to the creation of conditions in which a military presence headed by NATO will no longer be necessary. NATO has adopted a series of criteria for measuring the progress achieved in the overall implementation of the Peace

Agreement. This will make it possible gradually to reduce the number of Force members and reduce its profile in terms of its agreed tasks.

4. We are strongly in favour of continuing implementation of arms-control and confidence-building measures at the local and regional levels. We look forward to the opening of negotiations on arms control, as provided for in the Peace Agreement, in order to restore a regional balance in the former Yugoslavia and the surrounding countries, particularly with appropriate provisions for verification. The Alliance has begun a series of cooperation activities with Bosnia and Herzegovina in the field of security with a view to promoting trust and cooperation in the country's armed forces and encouraging the development of democratic practices and centralized defence mechanisms, such as the Standing Committee for Military Affairs created by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

5. We call upon all the parties to the Peace Agreement to redouble their efforts for the full implementation of the Agreement, thereby creating the conditions for a peaceful, stable and prosperous future for Bosnia and Herzegovina.